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Good morning Chairperson Slossberg, Chairman Spallone, Ranking Members McLachlan, and Hetherington and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. I would like to thank the committee for raising Senate Bill 772, *AAC The Freedom of Information Act*.

The idea embodied in SB 772 is a good one, and it's a proposal that can go along way in assisting our municipalities during these trying times. As you know, the House Republican Caucus proposed a similar bill, HB 5218, which goes further than SB 772 in that it delays the mandate of posting minutes on municipal websites until July 2012.

As you are quite aware, our state is in financial turmoil; the deficit grows by the day and everyone is feeling the pinch. We are asking the citizens of the state to conserve anyway possible and our cities and towns are in the same situation. They are looking to save every nickel and dime in their town budgets. Senate Bill 772 and other proposals like it can give municipalities a way to save some of that money.

Less than a week ago the House Republican Caucus hosted a bi-partisan Roundtable discussion with Mayors and First Selectmen from all over the state. Over 25 officials participated in the event. During the discussion period, I asked the town leaders how the legislature could help them during this very difficult time. Overwhelmingly the answer was to rid towns of the burden of unfunded mandates. SB 772 attempts to relieve one of the many unfunded mandates that municipalities have to endure, but I believe we should go further than the delay date of October 1, 2009 found in SB 772. I would also encourage this committee and the entire General Assembly to take a look at reducing other municipal mandates that our towns just can't afford to keep up with right now.

We do support the language in SB 772 that recognizes that if municipalities have a hardship in posting the minutes on their websites, they will not have to comply with the mandate.

Let's make a show of good faith and give our municipalities an extended pass on this unfunded mandate and others, and let them worry about the larger picture of their budgets.

Again, thank you for raising the concept embodied in SB 772 and allowing me to testify on the matter.